

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RANGOO 01946 301144Z
ACTION AID-31

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FM AMEMBASSY RANGOON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5454

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FOR STATE EA BUREAU AND AID ASIA BUREAU

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAID, BM
SUBJECT: AID SURVEY TEAM VISIT

REF: A. STATE 88021, B. STATE 90113

1. THE AID SURVEY TEAM, COMPOSED OF MESSRS. STEINBERG, BOUCHER, AND NEWBERG, ARRIVED IN BURMA ON MAY 17 AND DEPARTED MAY 27. INASMUCH AS THE TEAM WILL BE WRITING A REPORT UPON ITS RETURN TO WASHINGTON, I DO NOT PROPOSE TO CHRONICLE ITS ACTIVITIES IN THIS MESSAGE. HOWEVER, I WOULD LIKE TO SHARE A FEW OBSERVATIONS AND IMPRESSIONS CONCERNING THE VISIT WITH THE DEPARTMENT AND AID.

2. THE BURMESE WERE CLEARLY FORTHCOMING IN THEIR RELATIONSHIPS WITH THE TEAM. THAT THE GUB ATTACHED HIGH IMPORTANCE TO THE TEAM'S VISIT WAS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE HIGH LEVEL OF PARTICIPATION BY GUB OFFICIALS IN THE SUBSTANTIVE MEETINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE. THESE INCLUDED THE MINISTERS OF FINANCE AND PLANNING, EDUCATION, AND COOPERATIVES; AND THE DEPUTY MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, AGRICULTURE, FINANCE AND PLANNING, AND CONSTRUCTION. OTHER MEETINGS INCLUDED A VARIETY OF DIRECTORS GENERAL AND PRINCIPAL OFFICERS OF ORGANIZATIONS, SUCH AS THE CENTRAL RESEARCH ORGANIZATION, THE ECONOMIC INSTITUTE AND THE UNION OF BURMA BANK (THE CENTRAL BANK).

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3. EACH MEETING WAS ATTENDED BY SENIOR STAFF OF THE RELEVANT MINISTRY OR CORPORATION. THE TEAM WAS TOLD THAT THE SUBSTANCE OF ITS FIRST MEETINGS WAS COMMUNICATED TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE GUB. IN HIS FINAL MEETING WITH THE TEAM (MAY 26), THE MINISTER OF FINANCE AND PLANNING WAS MOST EFFUSIVE IN EXPRESSING HIS APPRECIATION FOR THE ACTIVE INTEREST OF THE TEAM IN THE

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASPIRATIONS OF BURMA. THAT EVENING AT A DINNER HE HOSTED IN HONOR OF THE TEAM, THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION SIMILARLY EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THE TEAM'S PRESENCE AND USG INTEREST.

4. THE MANNER AND LEVEL OF THE HANDLING OF THE TEAM'S VISIT IS A STRONG SIGNAL THAT THE GUB IS INTERESTED IN RESUMING AN ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE USG. THEY LOOK FORWARD, AS DOES THIS EMBASSY, TO THE NEXT STEPS IN MOVING THE RELATIONSHIP FORWARD. MY PARTICIPATION IN SOME OF THE EVENTS OF THE VISIT AND MY EXIT INTERVIEW WITH THE TEAM LEFT ME WITH THE IMPRESSION THAT THE TEAM IS OPTIMISTIC THAT THERE IS A BASIS FOR A CAUTIOUS AND MODEST INITIATIVE FOR THE RESUMPTION OF ASSISTANCE TO BURMA. I SHARE THAT VIEW.
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